

# Future Of Bridgeport, Canaryville To Be Focus Of New Community Plan

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The peak of Bridgeport's Palmisano Park

Chicago Screenshots

**BRIDGEPORT** — A regional planning agency will help Bridgeport and Canaryville prepare for the future.

The two neighborhoods have been chosen by the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning to help the communities determine a plan of action for future growth. The agency works with local governments, nonprofits and community groups to address issues like transportation, land use and quality of life, and this year the group has projects in 34 Chicago-area communities.

In Bridgeport and Canaryville, the group will conduct a "planning priorities report" that will seek to determine the biggest issues facing the community and come up with a plan to address them, said Stephen Ostrander, project director for the agency.

After interviewing a wide variety of community residents and leaders, the group could recommend the community draft a comprehensive action plan that incorporates diverse issues like housing, infrastructure and safety. Or it could be more focused and concrete, like a proposal to develop a commercial corridor or address housing affordability.

"It gives the community a snapshot of where its at and where it wants to go in the future," Noah Boggess, project manager for the agency, said of the plan.

Work on the project will begin in January and could take six to eight months. Most of the interviews with community groups and individuals will be conducted in private, but there will likely be a community forum for the public to weigh in, Ostrander said.

Ald. Patrick D. Thompson (11th) and Cook County Commissioner John Daley applied for the project and it was one of 34 pitches selected out of 80. The local leaders asked the agency to look at a range of topics including transportation, economic development and housing, and asked that as many people as possible be included.

"This would be new to the community," Ostrander said. "They wanted to be sure we had our ears to the ground."

The neighborhood has slowly changed from a traditional blue-collar community to a diverse hub for young professionals and artists. The agency will work to determine what that change has meant for factors like housing and transportation. It will also use data like Census information to see what changing demographics, especially the influx of Asian populations, has meant for the community.

"These are communities in something of a transition, especially Bridgeport," Ostrander said. "I'm really going to be fascinated to see what the evolution has been."